

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO CINCUSNAVEUR

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT

SUBJECT: US NAVY MOVES AFFECTING ITALY - CTF 60

REF: CINCUSNAVEUR 171632Z MAY 75

TO ADMIRAL SHEAR FROM AMBASSADOR VOLPE

1. I HAVE READ THE REFERENCE MESSAGE AND WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION ON A COUPLE OF POINTS. AS I INDICATED TO YOU IN OUR CONVERSATION, THE TRANSFER OF CTF 60 TO ITALY CAN PROBABLY BE ARRANGED, BUT THERE ARE SOME SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WHICH WILL REQUIRE VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BEFORE WE MAKE ANY APPROACH TO THE GOI. GIVEN THE PLANNED DEPARTURE OF PIEDMONT DEPENDENTS AND THE TRANSFER OF VR-24 TO SIGONELLA, THE ADDED NUMBERS AT NAPLES WILL NOT LIKELY BE AT ISSUE. BUT, OBVIOUSLY, NO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ITALIANS WOULD BE ADVISABLE UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS NEXT MONTH. THE BASIC PROBLEM, HOWEVER, REMAINS THAT WE HAVE ASSURED THE ITALIANS THAT NO, REPEAT NO, U.S. ACTIVITIES WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO ITALY FROM GREECE. THAT POSSIBILITY, YOU WILL RECALL, WAS FREQUENTLY AND INSISTENTLY RAISED BY THE GOI'S OPPOSITION FROM THE LEFT AFTER THE GREEKS ANNOUNCED THEIR REEXAMINATION OF TIES WITH THE U.S. AND NATO.

2. IN PRINCIPLE WE THINK THE CTF 60 GROUP COULD BE NOTIFIED TO THE ITALIANS AS PART OF ADMIRAL TURNER'S STAFF. BUT BE-
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CAUSE IT IS WIDELY KNOWN THAT THE DESIGNATION "CTF 60" WAS

APPLIED TO A UNIT ESTABLISHED IN ATHENS, CHANGING THE NAME OF THIS INCREMENT WILL LIKELY BE NECESSARY. IDEALLY THE STAFF ASSIGNED TO NAPLES WOULD BE COMPRISED OF NEW PERSONNEL RATHER THAN PERSONS BROUGHT BY TRANSFER FROM ATHENS. I WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING YOUR VIEWS ON THESE AND ANY OTHER IDEAS YOU MAY HAVE IN THIS VERY SENSITIVE MATTER.

3. ALSO, I AM A LITTLE UNCLEAR ABOUT THE REFERENCE TO THE CARRIER AND EMBARKING THE CTF 60 STAFF. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CARRIER WILL NOT, REPEAT NOT, BE HOMEPORTED IN ITALY. THE VISIT SCHEDULE WOULD BE INCREASED BY NOT ALWAYS, OR EVEN USUALLY, AT NAPLES.

4. WE HAVE BEGUN TO RECEIVE THE DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR OFFICE ON THE EARLY UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT VR-24. WE PLAN SOON TO INFORM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ABOUT THE MOVE TO SIGONELLA. THOUGH WE EXPECT NO ADVERSE REACTION, IT CANNOT BE PRECLUDED. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE ADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION OF INITIAL ITALIAN ACQUISCENCE IN THE PROGRAM TO OVERCOME ANYTHING SHORT OF A SHARP POLITICAL REACTION. VOLPE

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